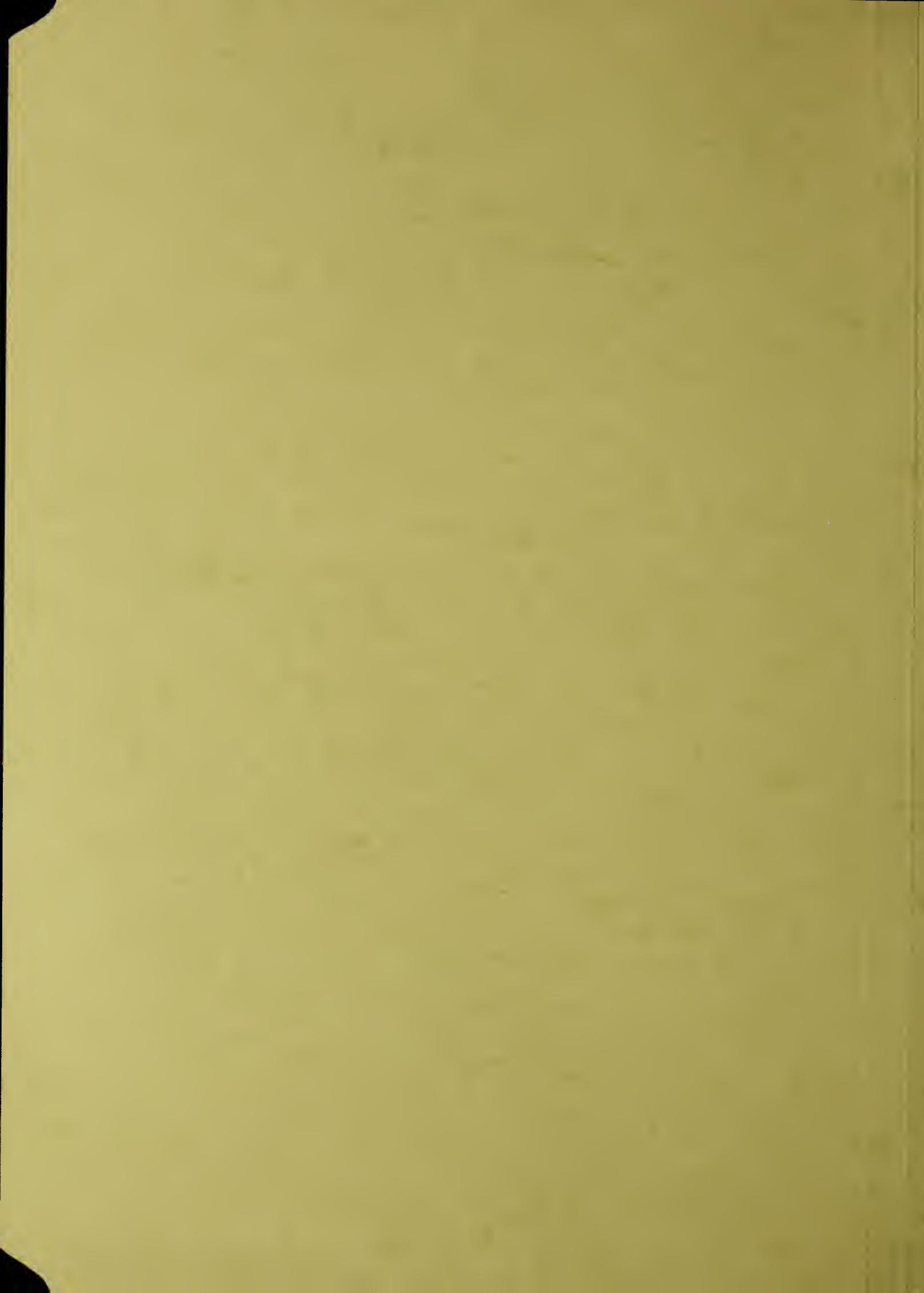


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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Rev. R. B. Garrett

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
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CAPTURE OF LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN.

me to take down a map from the wall. He put it on the floor and studied it, tracing a line from Norfolk to Charleston by water and from Charleston to Galveston, Tex. I asked him where he wanted to go and he said to Mexico. So far as I know this was the only clew as to his intended escape. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon or later some men rode up and left one of their number at the gate. He came in and Boyd introduced him as Mr. Harris. Harris was in fact David E. Harold, who was afterward hung with Mrs. Surratt, and who had been a party to the attempt to assassinate Secretary Seward. Some little time later the men came hurriedly back and said that the troops were crossing the river at Port Royal. The two men became very much excited at this intelligence, and Boyd sent me up to my room for his pistols which he had left hanging on the bed post. By the time I got down a detachment of troops rode past on the road a quarter of a mile from the house. As a matter of fact they were after Jett, knowing that he had crossed the river with Booth and supposing that Booth was still with him. They got Jett twelve miles further on and made him tell where he had left Booth.

"When the troops passed our house," he continued, "the two men walked down to a piece of woods back of the house and stayed there about an hour, returning to ask my brother if he would rent them a horse to take them to the nearest railway station. He refused, having become suspicious of them, but helped them make a bargain with a colored man who lived near by. The negro was to call for them early next morning. My father was not feeling well that evening and he retired early. The men sat out on the upper gallery and talked till quite late, after which they asked if they might sleep in the barn, fifty yards away, so as not to disturb my father when they got out in the morning. This explains why Booth was killed in a barn. That night about 2 o'clock my father was awakened to find the yard full of men with swords and pistols drawn.

"They demanded the wounded man that was left there, and my father told them he did not know where he was. They told him that lies would not answer and that they would hang him if he deceived them. He protested his ignorance and their threat was about to be put into execution when some one called out that there were men in the barn. The barn was surrounded. I was a witness to all this, and Booth or Boyd, began calling out to the men trying to find out if they were federals or confederates, without getting a satisfactory answer. The troops were in command of Col. L. B. Baker, who died recently in Michigan—I got a letter from him not three months ago. Booth finally said, 'There's a man in here wants to surrender,' and the doors opened and Harold put his hands out and they were hand-cuffed by the soldiers and pulled out. They tried to get Booth to surrender, but he would not. He said if they would call the men off a distance he would come out and fight them. The soldiers had built a brush fire and he could see them, but they could not see him. After a long parley Col. Conger told him if he did not come out he would burn the barn over his head. Booth's reply was that they could burn him with the barn, but he would never surrender. Conger then

pulled out a whisp of hay and set fire to it. The fire finally blazed up so we could see Booth. He was standing in the middle of the barn, leaning on his crutch and with his carbine on his arm and his hat fallen to the floor.

"Just as the fire had almost reached him a shot was fired and he sank down where he was standing. The shot was fired by Sergeant Boston Corbett and was positively against orders, it being the intention to take him alive. Some of the men dragged the dying man out and placed him on the grass. At that moment he looked up and said: 'It's hard this man's property is being destroyed, as he does not know who I am.' Those words saved my father's life undoubtedly, as there was a proclamation out promising death to the person who would harbor the assassin. When the fire got too hot Booth was moved to the front porch and a physician sent for. Booth sent this message to his mother: 'Tell my mother I died for my country; I did what I thought best.' He never moved after he was shot through the neck and paralyzed from that point down. He was then thoroughly identified by pictures and by persons who knew him personally, and this was the first inkling we had as to who he really was. His body was sewed up in a blanket and taken away.

"As I remember him," continued Dr. Garrett, "he was a handsome fellow with black hair and drooping black moustache and a fair skin. He was very quiet while he was with us, and talked freely only with the children. The man was evidently insane. That is the view his relatives take of it. A letter I received from Edwin Booth, and which was published in the Century, said that he was so regarded by the family and that this met with no sympathy from them. As to there being a conspiracy, I take little stock in the story, as the men he got to help him were not intelligent men, and if there was a conspiracy, Booth was the sum total of it, as he probably hired the others to help."

JOHN WILKES BOOTH.

REV. DR. GARRETT GRAPHICALLY DESCRIBES HIS TRAGIC DEATH.

Edwin Booth's Letters—Three That Have Never Before Been Published. In One the Great Actor Speaks of the Power of Prayer.

6.16.1894

Rev. Dr. R. B. Garrett, of Austin, Tex., who preached at Brantly Baptist Church yesterday, is perhaps the only man living who witnessed the death of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln. Although at the time Dr. Garrett was but 12 years old, the events are stamped indelibly upon his memory.

In his room at the Howard House yesterday he described in an interesting way the events which occurred nearly 30 years ago.

"My father," said Dr. Garrett, "who was Richard Garrett, lived on a farm about two and one half miles south of Port Royal, Va. About 3 o'clock on the afternoon of April 24, 1865, three men came to our farm gate. Two of them wore the uniforms of Confederate soldiers, while the third was dressed in the garb of a civilian. The civilian was riding a horse, and was suffering from an injured leg. My father was called to the gate, and the men introduced themselves as Captain Jett, Lieutenant Ruggles and the injured man, who was John Wilkes Booth, although my father was not aware of it at the time, was introduced as James W. Boyd. The officers said that he had been wounded by Federal soldiers, and asked if he might stop until his wounds got better, or until he was able to travel. My father consented, and Boyd was lifted from the horse. With the aid of a crutch which he carried, and with the assistance of my father, he hobbled into the yard. My mother brought out a large arm-chair and a pillow, and the injured man was made as comfortable as possible on the green sward.

SUFFERED GREAT PAIN.

"After remaining for a short time the officers who accompanied Mr. Boyd left. My father and myself remained in the yard with the injured man for some time, but as he seemed to be in considerable pain and not inclined to talk, he was left to his own thoughts. That same evening two of my older brothers, who were serving in the Confederate Army, returned home on a furlough. When supper was announced we helped Mr. Boyd into the dining-room, and the family, with the wounded stranger, sat down to supper.

"The supper seemed to revive our guest, and during the meal his spirits revived and a very pleasant hour was spent. My two brothers, fresh from the scenes of conflict, related stories, which were listened to with considerable interest by our guest. Both of my brothers wore the Confederate gray, which was torn and very much worn. During the meal Mr. Boyd said he had an idea of rejoining the forces as soon as his injury would permit, and asked one of my brothers if he would trade his uniform for the civilian dress worn by him. The suit worn by Mr. Boyd was neat, and of the finest texture, and my brother passed the remark off as a meaningless joke. Mr. Boyd was persistent, however, and finally my brother declined for the reason that he wished to keep the uniform on account of the associations connected with it. After supper the hours were spent in general conversation until bedtime. Our guest, in the meantime, had relapsed again into a morose and thoughtful mood, and had little to say. He shortly expressed a desire to retire, and was shown to a room. My brother and I occupied the same apartment.

"When Mr. Boyd retired we assisted him to undress. My childish curiosity was attracted to a belt containing two big pistols and a pearl-handled revolver, which he hung on the bedpost. A pair of pearl opera glasses were also laid on a chair.

HE'LL NEVER FORGET THAT FACE.

"The next morning I awoke before the stranger. I never shall forget to my dying day the picture as imprinted on my mind of the man as he lay there asleep in bed. Such a face I never saw before, or never expect to look upon again. Jet black curls clustered about a brow as

white as marble, and a heavy, dark mustache shaded a mouth as beautiful as a woman's. One hand was thrown above the head of the sleeper, as soft, and as white as a child's."

"That morning when he arose he went out into the yard, and spent most of the time lying on a couch under an apple tree from which the white blossoms were falling, playing with the children. About noon he went into the house and asked if I would get down a map hanging on the wall and place it on the floor. He lay down on the map and traced what I supposed a course which he intended to take in making his escape. After considerable study he drew a line in pencil to Norfolk, thence to Charleston, S. C., and from there to Savannah, Ga. From there he traced the line to Galveston and from there down into Mexico. This, I think, is the only clew he ever gave as to his plan of escape. I have the map still at home, with the lines traced by Booth as he lay on the floor, with I standing over him, in my father's house.

"Next day my brother brought the news of Lincoln's assassination. We were cut off from any information with the outside world on account of the war, although the tragedy happened only 60 miles away. My brother said there was \$100,000 reward offered for the murderer, and also remarked that he had not better get in his way. Our guest, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, said:

"Why, you wouldn't betray a friend for that amount, would you?"

"In the afternoon Lieutenant Ruggles drove up with a companion, who proved to be Harold, and delivered a message to the stranger. He immediately sent upstairs for his belt and pistols, and, after buckling them on, left and went out into the woods. The message brought by the Lieutenant was that the troops were on his track and had crossed the Raapahannock a few miles below the farm. They came back in the evening, and asked if they could not sleep in the barn, as they said the soldiers were probably after him for shooting a soldier a few days before in Maryland. Permission was granted, and they went to the barn, where a lot of refugees from Port Royal had stored a lot of furniture. During the night the soldiers arrived, and my father, hearing a noise, went out to the barnyard. A pistol was placed to his head and he was told to reveal the hiding place of a man he was concealing. My father denied that he was concealing anyone, and a rope was placed about his neck. My brother then told them that two men were in the barn.

Booth's Capture.

"The officers asked the stranger and his companion to surrender, but were met with a stout refusal. Harold finally weakened and came out. Considerable parleying ensued, and finally it was determined to fire the structure. A wisp of hay was pulled through a crack of the barn and a match applied. In an instant the flames leaped to the roof and red glare was thrown around the inside. Through the cracks could be seen the form of Booth standing in the middle of the building supported by his crutch. In his hands he held a carbine which Harold had left. At this instant Sergeant Corbet, who died in an insane asylum in Kansas two years ago, fired through a crack in the wall and Booth fell to the floor. He said afterward that Booth had his gun to his shoulder and was about to kill one of the officers. This is not so, as I was standing within six feet of Corbet when he fired the shot, and Booth never made a motion to shoot.

"The assassin was dragged from the barn by my brother and carried to the porch, where he died. My mother and sister made him as comfortable as possible, and the family was with him when he breathed his last. One of his long, black locks had fallen over his forehead, and this my mother cut off. His last words were:

"Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best."

"With this John Wilkes Booth passed away. On his right arm was his name in India ink. This, if nothing else, fully established his identity, which has so often been doubted. The lock of hair, or part of it, I have still in my possession. The other part I sent to his mother about 10 or 12 years ago. Mr. I. C. Haas, who was then the publisher of the Baltimorean in this city, sent me a letter when I was living in West Virginia, saying that Edwin Booth had authorized him to get his mother's lock of hair, then in my possession. I wrote to Edwin Booth in regard to the matter, and received the following letter:

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE.

"Although importuned time and time again by the press, this is the first time these letters, which passed between Edwin

Booth and myself, have ever appeared in print. In answer to my letter, he wrote the following:

"Mount Vernon Hotel, Baltimore, March

15, 1877.—R. B. Garrett, Esq.: Dear Sir—No one has been authorized to solicit the souvenir you possess, none of the family being aware of its existence. The painful subject is never referred to by any of us, although, of course, everything associated with the unfortunate boy is sacred to his heart-broken mother, and I am sure the relics you have preserved will be dearly prized by her, should you be willing to let her have it. Your family has the warmest thanks for the kindness shown to him whose madness wrought so much ill to us. Very truly yours,

"EDWIN BOOTH."

"I sent the memento, and it was three years until I heard from him. I then received a case of books and the following letter:

"Mr. R. B. Garrett: Dear Sir—You will please me very much by your acceptance of the accompanying volumes, which I have requested my friend, Mr. Garrison of Baltimore, to procure and forward to your address. With kind regard and good wishes I remain, truly yours,

"EDWIN BOOTH."

EDWIN BOOTH ON PRAYER.

"The last letter received from Mr. Booth places him in an entirely different light, as to religious matters, than the light in which I had ever considered him. It speaks for itself, and no doubt will be read with a great deal of interest by his thousands of friends and admirers:

"New York, Feb. 22, 1880.—R. B. Garrett, Esq.: Dear Sir—The knowledge that my little gifts afford you so much gratification, and will be of service to you, amply repays me, though your thanks are none the less welcome, for I know they are sincere, as I am sure your prayers for me will be. Wishing for you the same blessing you ask of God for me, I am, sincerely yours,

"EDWIN, BOOTH."

Rev. Dr. Garrett has many relics and mementos of the sad event witnessed when but a boy on his father's porch. Among them are the blood-stained cot and pillow on which Booth died, a lock of the assassin's hair and a piece of his clothing. Owing to Dr. Garrett's failing health he has given up his charge in Texas, and will enter the lecture field this fall under the direction of Rev. Dr. Wharton of Brantly Baptist Church.—Baltimore Herald.

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J. W. R. WRIGHT

ONLY MAN NOW LIVING WHO SAW BOOTH DIE TELLS THE STORY OF HIS LAST HOUR

His Narrative Gives an Interesting Sidelight on How Soldiers of the La
Cause Regarded the Slayer of Abraham Lincoln

New York Sun Feb 11, 1917

New York Sun Feb 11, 1917

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The Rev. Dr. Richard B. Garrett is the only person living who witnessed the death of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Lincoln. Dr. Garrett now lives in Portsmouth, Va. He was 11 years old when Booth was captured in his father's tobacco barn.

By the Rev. Dr. R. B. GARRETT.

ABOUT 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon, April 24, 1865, my father and I were sitting on the front porch of our Virginia farm house when we saw four men ride up to the gate and halt. I was then 11 years of age and the happenings were of such a startling nature that they were indelibly impressed upon my memory.

"Good evenin'," was their greeting. We always say "evening" after the noon hour. My father returned the greeting and we sauntered down to the gate. One of the men, dressed as a Confederate captain, said:

"Mr. Garrett, I suppose you hardly remember me."

"No, sir; I cannot recall you," replied my father.

"Well, my name is Jett, son of your old friend Jett of Westmoreland county."

My father remembered a man of the name of Jett, but had no recollection of his son. However, he welcomed this man, who turned to his companions and introduced them.

"Lieut. Ruggles and Lieut. Daugherty, Confederate officers," he said. Then, turning to the fourth man, he made more of a ceremony of the introduction.

"This," said the man who called himself Jett, "is my dear friend James Lloyd, a Confederate soldier who was wounded at the battle of Petersburg. He is trying to get to his home in Maryland. Can you take care of him for a few days until his wound is healed sufficiently to permit him to travel?"

My father was known for miles and miles around for his hospitality. He had shared it with the Federal as well as the Confederate wayfarers. Our home was two and a half miles south of Port Royal, on the Rappahannock River and on the road that led directly to Bowling Green, sixteen miles south. Naturally many travellers from both

sides of the great conflict passed our home and many were entertained.

My father promptly offered to care for the four, but the first three thanked him and declared they must go on. They helped Boyd down from his horse and handed him a crutch. The three waved a farewell to him and left, while he limped into the house. I followed him in and placed a chair for him. Then I brought him some fresh water and asked him if the wound still pained him.

"Yes," answered Boyd, "it was not properly cared for and riding has jarred it so that it gives me great pain."

My father and I washed and banded the wound and he went out on the cool porch, where he slept in a chair for several hours. I was greatly interested in him. He was a handsome man with clear cut features and a head crowned with a shock of beautiful black hair. I distinctly remember how I longed to take his opera glasses. He had two pairs attached to a belt.

As we discussed the news of the day at the supper table that night Boyd was rather quiet. We were all charmed with the evident culture and refinement of the man and he was assigned to my brother Jack's room and Jack slept with me. Jack had just come home from the war after serving as a Confederate soldier. The next morning Jack went off early to Port Conway to fish and he came home in great excitement about 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

"Lincoln has been assassinated," he exclaimed, "and there is great excitement over at the Port!"

"It was a reckless man who did it!" declared my father.

"You think so?" Boyd asked with considerable energy.

"Yes, indeed. No good will come of it," my father insisted.

"What makes you hold that opinion?" Boyd asked.

"Because Lincoln made a better President than many people realize and I am sure he would have been far more lenient with the South than any successor will be."

"What reward is offered?" asked Boyd.

"One hundred thousand dollars," Jack told him.

"Only a hundred thousand!" exclaimed Boyd, with a surprised expression. "Why, I expected—I should expect it would be at least half a million.

I think they'd give that much, too, to get the man."

"He'd better not cross my path," said my brother. "I'd behead him for my share of that money."

"Would you?" demanded Boyd.

"No," said my brother, laughing, "but it would be a big temptation to a poor Southern soldier home from war without a cent in his pocket. But I wouldn't harm a hair of his head. I'm tired of fighting and have shouldered my gun for the last time."

Boyd smiled in a most engaging manner.

"I did not take you to be a blood-thirsty sort of a young man," he said.

After we left the table my mother offered to dress his wound, but he declined, saying: "No, madam, I thank you. Though it does give me pain, there are other things I have to think of more than my wounds."

That afternoon—Tuesday, after 5 o'clock—we saw a heavy cloud of dust down the road, and presently three men rode up to the front gate. Two of them were Jett and Ruggles, the third a stranger.

"There's one of our men now!" exclaimed Boyd with interest, arising.

"What do you mean by 'our men'?" demanded my big brother.

"Oh, just some men who crossed the river with me," was Boyd's hasty reply. Then in great excitement he said: "Will you please go to my room and get my pistol which I left beneath my pillow?"

"What's the matter? Why are you so nervous?" demanded Jack.

"I feel safer when I am armed—been accustomed to it," murmured Boyd.

So Jack got his pistol, and although his large holster contained several weapons he crowded the pistol into it and hobble down to the front gate, where he met the man who came with Jett and Ruggles and seemed to know him. They remained there talking while Jett and Ruggles rode on.

"He acts strange," I told my father.

"Just what I was thinking," declared my brother. In fact all of us had become rather suspicious, but we had not connected him with the assassination of the President.

While Boyd and the stranger were

tailing at the gate and our family were becoming more and more nervous and suspicious. Jett and Ruggles came dashing back in a cloud of dust, riding at full speed.

"Make your escape!" they shouted to Boyd. "The Federals are crossing the river at Port Royal!"

They rode into a thicket near by and hid, while Boyd, aided by the stranger, ran for some underbrush back of the barn and secreted himself.

It was not long before fifty United States cavalrymen appeared, riding fast along the road from Port Royal, and stopped to water their horses at a place nearly opposite our home owned by a negro, Ned Freeman. Then they went on two miles to a tavern called the Trap, where they took supper and rested a while before proceeding to Bowling Green.

Boyd and his companion came back to the house from their hiding place and offered my brother \$10 to take them over to Guinea. When he asked them why they wished to go there Boyd said he wanted to go to Louisa Court House and join a Maryland battery that had not been disbanded. Jack refused. He said his horse had been working all day and was tired.

"I'll give you \$150 for the horse," offered Boyd eagerly, but my brother, now thoroughly suspicious, declined. Jack was now convinced that something was decidedly wrong and went to my father about it.

My father tried to persuade him that his suspicions were groundless, but Jack would not be persuaded.

"The war is 'over,'" he said, "and there must be something serious going on or United States soldiers would not be dashing through the country." Then he went across the road to talk with the negro, Ned Freeman, who told him the soldiers had said they were hunting for two men, one of them lame. That settled it in Jack's mind, although even then he did not couple this with the assassination of Lincoln. He hurried back to the house and spoke to Boyd.

"Did you get into any trouble over in Maryland?" he asked.

"There was a little trouble, but it has blown over," was Boyd's careless rejoinder.

"Well, I must ask you to leave then, because my father is an old man and I do not want to distress him or have him distressed. He has been through enough trouble as it is," was Jack's demand. Young as I was I remember standing beside Jack, determined to help him if necessary.

They were sitting on the porch smoking. Boyd asked if he could not sleep on the porch, but my father told him the dogs were too savage, and asked him why he couldn't sleep upstairs as he had done the night before. Boyd didn't answer, but asked if he could sleep in the tobacco barn, not far off. When told that it was used for storing rubbish he said he wouldn't mind that at all.

For a while after supper he sat there smoking, the picture of despair. About 9 o'clock Jack got the key to the tobacco barn and took the two men out there to spend the night. Double doors were on all four sides and in the upper story were large windows. Bunches of tobacco hung from the rafters and hay and old furniture were piled about. Jack moved some furniture, piled up some hay for a bed and locked the men in for the night.

Jack was so suspicious that he asked me to stay with him that night in a nearby shed; he said he was afraid the men would steal our horses and get away.

Meanwhile, as we learned afterward, Capt. Jett had gone on past the tavern where the soldiers stopped to rest and reached Bowling Green ahead of them. They found him there asleep.

We also found out afterward that Jett had learned Monday morning that "Boyd" was in reality John Wilkes Booth. When Booth and his body servant, Herold, crossed the river from Fort Crowsley to Port Royal Jett overheard Booth ask if any Confederate soldiers were around there. Jett introduced himself as Capt. Jett, and as they walked up the bank Herold told Jett that the lame man was Booth. Booth asked him to take him to a place of safety, and Jett procured horses and started, although Herold dropped behind somewhere on the road, and they were joined by Ruggles and Daugherty.

When the soldiers found Jett asleep at Bowling Green they ordered him at the point of a pistol to take them to Booth's hiding place, and in the dead of the night they arrived at our home excited and boisterous.

My father had retired early that night and had no idea that his guests were sleeping in the tobacco barn. He heard the noise, and came out and asked the men what they meant by such conduct at that time of night.

"What do you mean by harboring the murderer of President Lincoln?" they demanded of him.

"I know nothing of the President's assassin," my father honestly protested. "Two men asked to spend the night here, and as I never turn any one away I put them up and made no inquiries."

"If you don't tell where the murderer is hiding I will shoot you through the heart," declared a detective named Baker, putting his pistol against my father's breast.

"Don't shoot him; hang him!" exclaimed several of the soldiers.

Although my father still disclaimed any knowledge of the whereabouts of the men they put him under a guard of four soldiers, who crowded about him so closely that he could scarcely move. But all this awakened Jack and me, and we came out to learn the trouble. In the dark they grabbed us, then, learning who we were, asked us if we knew where the men were hiding. When they told us what they wanted Jack could not help exclaiming:

"There, I knew something was wrong!" and we promptly told them the men were in the old tobacco barn.

Almost as one man the soldiers and detectives made a rush for the barn and loudly ordered Booth to come out. That it was John Wilkes Booth, the man who shot Lincoln, whom we had been sheltering came as a great shock to all of our family.

When the soldiers ordered Booth to come out he answered with a thunderous "No!" Then he added, "If you will give me fifty steps I will make my escape," whereupon it was the turn of the soldiers to shout "No!" quite as thunderously. Then Booth saved my father's life, at least I shall always believe it, for he said:

"There is one man here who will surrender, but I never will. I want you all to know, however, that the gentleman with whom I am stopping doesn't know me nor what I have done."

When Herold, for whom Booth plainly had great contempt, stepped out the soldiers tied him to a tree where he could see all that was going on.

Then the soldiers made my brother pile hay about the barn and some brush and they set fire to it. From within Booth could see them as plain as by day, in the glare of the flames. He called out, through the blackness of the opening:

"Gentlemen, I could pick off all of you, but I don't wish to do it. I have accomplished all I want. I wouldn't hurt a hair of your heads."

At this the men put out the fire and, gathering some hay, ran into the barn. Col. Conger set fire to it and soon the building was in flames.

Then we saw Booth plainly. He stood as erect as possible, supported by his crutch. His face was set and deadly pale. As soon as the flames disclosed him Sergeant Boston Corbett took aim with his pistol and shot him through the throat. He fell instantly.

"Get his body out of those flames," the soldiers ordered my brother.

Why they should have made a young lad take the risk I never quite understood, but Jack was too good a soldier to disobey and he dashed in and with great difficulty dragged out the body. Then the soldiers took Booth to our porch and sent a messenger for Dr. Urquhart. We thought he was dead, but when some one attempted to place a pillow under his head he opened his eyes and said:

"No, no, let me lie here, let me die here."

Later when they tried to make him more comfortable he repeated this request and we did not disturb him, although a lady who was visiting with us wet a cloth and placed it to his dry lips. Under her gentle touch he opened his big, fascinating eyes and looked at her. He even tried to smile as he said:

"Tell mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best."

We all stood about, every member of our family and the soldiers and others. I was so near to him that I could have touched him when he died. Once again he repeated the request that some one

tell his mother he died for his country; and just as the sun of a new day was rising red in the East the curtain of his life went down.

The soldiers sewed the body of the strange, deluded man in an army blanket, put it in a spring wagon, with Herold as its companion, and drove to the river.

The rest of the story is better known. The body was taken to Washington and secretly buried; it remained in that grave two years and was then given up by President Johnson and finally buried in the family lot in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore.

Herold, as every history relates, was executed along with Lewis Payne, George Atzerodt and Mary Surratt. It is not known whether Dr. Mudd, who set Booth's leg, really knew him. His brother says he did not, and he was strong in his denials. However, he was banished to the Dry Tortugas for life, but for services rendered during a yellow fever epidemic was pardoned by President Johnson.

Now to go away back to the five people in that box at the theatre when Booth shot Lincoln: The President had invited Gen. and Mrs. Grant to sit with them, but they were called out of the city unexpectedly. In their places the President invited the daughter of Senator Ira Harris of New York and his stepson, Major H. R. Rathbone. Tragedies were awaiting all five at the moment Booth fired the fatal shot. But let Nicolay and Hay, in their life of Lincoln, tell it:

"Quick death was to come to the central figures of that company. Over all the rest the blackest fates hovered menacingly—fates from which a mother might pray that kindly death would save her children in infancy. One was to wander with the stain of murder on his soul, with the curses of the world on his name, with a price set upon his head, in frightful physical pain, till he died a dog's death in a burning barn; the stricken wife was to pass the rest of her days in melancholy and madness; of these two young lovers one was to slay the other, and then end his life a raving maniac."

Booth, however, did not die in the burning barn. Had he lain there his body would have been consumed by the flames which burned the building to a smouldering pile of ashes. He died on the front porch of my father's house at sunrise, and I stood with few feet of him when the end came.

Death of Lincoln's Assassin in Burning Barn Told by Boy Who Saw Him Perish

The following article on the death of John Wilkes Booth was written by the Rev. James S. Kirtley of Toledo, O., who for a long time supplied to The Union the Sunday school lessons which were printed in this newspaper every Saturday. It is particularly timely because it appears at about the anniversary of the death of President Lincoln, who fell victim of the bullet fired by Booth in Ford's theatre at Washington, April 14, 1865.

* * *

By JAMES S. KIRTLEY,

Of Toledo, Ohio.

The rather recent death of Rev. Dr. Richard B. Garrett removed the last eyewitness to the tragic death of the slayer of Abraham Lincoln. Dr. Garrett was a son of the man who unconsciously played host to the assassin of the president. Though he was a lad of 11, he carried through life a vivid recollection of the event and before his death furnished me the data for this story.

The recent revival of the old story that Booth did not die at the time and place, but that he escaped and lived in Mexico for 30 years, makes the story of the eyewitness all the more timely and interesting.

There seems to be only one person now living who saw Lincoln die, Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's son, having recently died. Thomas Proctor, who gave up his bed in a lodging house near the Ford theatre that the dying president might be placed on it, is now 85 years old and has been, for several years, in the St. Andrew's Brotherhood home in Gibsonia, Pa.

Mr. Garrett and his son Richard were sitting on their front porch about 8 o'clock on the afternoon of April 24 when three men on horseback rode up to the front gate and halted. The father and son went out and greeted them in their usual hospitable manner.

"Mr. Garrett, I suppose you hardly remember me," said one of them.

"No, sir, I believe not," was the reply.

"Well," said the young man, who was dressed as a Confederate officer, "my name is Jett and I'm the son of your old friend Jett, of Westmoreland County."

He turned to his two companions and introduced one as Lieut. Ruggles, also a Confederate officer, and nodding towards the other, he said, "This is my friend James Boyd, a Confederate officer who was wounded at the battle of Petersburg and is trying to get to his home in Maryland. Can you take care of him a few days until his wound will permit him to travel?"

TAKES IN WOUNDED MAN

Mr. Garrett was known for his hospitality far and wide and he always welcomed wayfarers, whether Union or Confederate. Many were the utter strangers he had entertained at his home.

He invited all to come in, but Jett and Ruggles said they were on their way to Bowling Green and didn't have time to stop. They helped the wounded man down, gave him a crutch and rode away, leading the horse that Boyd had been riding.

Boyd went in and was given a chair on the porch. The lad brought him a drink of water and asked him if his wound pained him much.

"Yes," replied Boyd, "it wasn't properly cared for and the riding has jarred it so that it gives me a great deal of pain."

Boyd was left alone and he sat on the porch several hours, dozing most of the time. The handsome face of the strange sleeper, his clearcut features and the shock of black hair crowning his shapely head touched the heroic sentiment of the boy. And there was a very interesting bait worn by the stranger in which a pair of opera glasses exposed to the lad's curious gaze.

At supper the family discussed the news of the day, and while Boyd took only a limited part in the conversation, he charmed them all with his grace and culture.

After supper he was assigned to the room occupied by Jack, an older son of Mr. Garrett, who had but lately returned from service in the Confederate army.

HEAR OF ASSASSINATION

Early the next morning, April 25, Jack went to Port Conway to fish, but returned about 1 in the afternoon quite excited by talk he had heard about the assassination of President Lincoln. Mr. Garrett exclaimed:

"Well, it was a reckless man who did it."

"You think so?" asked Boyd with some energy.

"Yes, no good will come of it," he replied.

When Boyd asked what made him think so, Mr. Garrett said Mr. Lincoln was a better president than they imagined and would be more lenient toward the South than his successor would be. Boyd inquired the amount of reward offered for the capture of the assassin, and when young Garrett told him, exclaimed: "One hundred thousand dollars! Why, that isn't as much as I expected them to offer. I guessed they would give \$500,000 for the murderer."

Another one of the Garrett boys spoke up: "Well, he'd better not cross my path; I'd behead him just to get a share."

"Would you?" asked Boyd.

"No," said the young man, laughing. "It would be a big temptation to a poor southern soldier home from the war without a cent, but I wouldn't harm a hair of his head, for I'm tired of fighting and have shouldered my gun for the last time."

Boyd replied with a faint smile:

"Well, I hadn't taken you for a bloodthirsty sort of man."

As they left the table Mrs. Garrett asked Boyd if she might not dress his wound.

"No, madam, I thank you, though it does give me pain," he replied. "There are other things I think of more than my wounds."

About 5 o'clock that afternoon they saw a heavy dust arising down the road and three men rode up rapidly. Boyd said, "Why, there's one of our men now."

SENDS FOR PISTOL

"What do you mean by one of your men?" asked Jack Garrett.

"Oh, just one who crossed the river with us," was his quick reply.

He grew excited and asked Jack to go upstairs and get his pistol, which he had left at the head of his bed.

"What's the matter with you? What makes you so nervous?"

"Oh, nothing. I always feel safer when I'm armed."

He put the pistol in a holster and hobbed to the front gate where he met a man whom they had not seen before, but who seemed to be an acquaintance of his.

It was at this point that young Garrett first told his father of the suspicions he had begun to feel about Boyd. In fact, all the family had be-

gun to have a haunting wonder as to who the remarkable stranger was.

The two other men who had ridden up were Jett and Ruggles. They went on north toward Port Royal, but shortly came galloping back and shouted to Boyd: "Make your escape, the Federals are crossing the river at Port Royal."

They rode on into a thicket nearby

and hid while Boyd and his companion ran for some underbrush.

It was not long before 50 U. S. cavalrymen came from the direction of Port Royal and stopped to water their horses at a place almost opposite the Garrett farm, owned by a colored man, Ned Freeman; then they rode on two miles to a tavern called the "Trap," where they took supper and rested a while before going on to Bowling Green.

After they had passed and were out of sight, Boyd, with his friend, came back to the house and offered Jack \$10 to take them over to Guinea. Jack declined because his horse had been working all day and was too tired. Then Boyd offered to buy the horse for \$150, but the offer was refused.

SUSPICION GROWS STRONGER

By this time Jack was convinced something was wrong and expressed his fears to his father. Mr. Garrett tried to disabuse his mind of suspicion, but Jack insisted that, as the war was over, the presence of these soldiers meant something serious.

He then walked over to Ned Freeman's to try to get light on the mystery. Ned told him the soldiers were hunting two men, one of whom was lame.

He returned to the house and asked Boyd if he had got into any trouble in Maryland and requested him, if he had, to go away, as his father was getting old and they didn't want anything to disturb him. Boyd reluctantly replied there had been a little trouble but it had blown over.

That evening, after supper, as they sat on the porch and smoked, Boyd asked if he and his companion might not sleep on the porch, to which Mr. Garrett replied that the dogs were too savage. Then he asked if they might sleep in a large tobacco barn not far off. They told him it had been used as a storeroom and contained a lot of rubbish, but he insisted he wouldn't mind that.

For a while Boyd sat on the porch, the picture of dejection. About 9 o'clock, at his request, young Garrett got the key to the barn and took them out to let them spend the night there. Double doors were on all four sides of the barn and, in the upper story, were large windows. Sticks of tobacco hung from the rafters, hay was piled up in places and old furniture was strewn all about the floor. They moved the furniture, piled up some hay for a bed and requested young Garrett to lock them in for the night. Garrett's suspicions were so persistent he and his brother slept under a nearby shed for fear Boyd and his friend might steal their horses and flee.

But to return to Jett and the soldiers who had followed on. While the soldiers were resting at the "Trap" Jett was on his way to Bowling Green. The soldiers soon followed and found him in Bowling Green fast asleep. They awakened him and demanded that he take them to the place where John Wilkes Booth, the murderer of President Lincoln, was concealed.

RETURN IN PURSUIT

At 2 o'clock in the morning they were back at the Garrett home, led by Captain Jett, for the man hiding in the barn was none other than the assassin of the President. His companion was his body servant, David E. Herold, afterwards hanged as co-conspirator.

Jett had first met Booth and Herold when they crossed the river Monday. He heard Booth ask the ferryman if there was a Confederate officer nearby and had introduced himself to Booth as such an officer.

As he walked up the beach with Booth, Herold, who was a few feet in advance, turned about and told Jett who they were and what they had done. Booth reprimanded him for doing so, but they both thought they would be secure with any Confederate soldier. On being asked to take them to a place of safety, Jett procured horses, was joined by his friend, Lieutenant Ruggles, and started for Mr. Garrett's home, which he had selected because of the latter's well-known hospitality. Before they reached the place they evidently made some temporary arrangement, for Herold stayed behind a while, as we have already seen.

Now at that early hour Jett brought the soldiers to the place where Booth had fraudulently secured shelter. They were an excited and noisy crowd and the commotion roused Mr. Garrett out of a sound sleep. He came out and they treated him pretty roughly, accusing him of harboring the slayer of Lincoln. He replied that he knew nothing of any murderer, that two men had asked him to let them spend the night and he never turned away anyone.

A detective named Baker put his pistol to Mr. Garrett's breast and threatened to shoot him dead if he didn't show where the assassin was; others threatened to hang him. Even after he had disclaimed any knowledge of the man they put him in a secure place under the guard of four men.

BOOTH AT BAY IN BURNING BARN

At this point Jack Garrett came up and told them where the two men were and they rushed to the barn. They ordered Booth to come out or they would burn the barn. He proposed that if they would give him 50 steps he would make good his escape, but they returned a thunderous "No."

In a firm voice Booth spoke to them: "There is one man here who will surrender, but I never will. I want you to know, however, that the gentleman with whom I am stopping doesn't know who I am nor what I have done."

The man Herold, Booth's bodyguard, was a coarse, cowardly fellow. He came out, scared nearly to death. They bound him to a tree nearby, where he could see all that went on at the barn. The soldiers compelled young Garrett to pile hay and brush around the building. Booth could see them from within by the light of the fire and he called out: "Gentlemen, I could pick off all of you with my pistol, but I don't wish to do it. I have accomplished all I want and I wouldn't hurt a hair of your heads."

Then Colonel Conger set fire to the hay and soon the whole building was in flames. Booth stood leaning on his crutch, his face white and set. When the light fell clearly on him, Sergeant Boston Corblit took aim with his pistol and shot him through the throat. He fell instantly and Jack Garrett was ordered to drag him from the burning barn, which he had much difficulty in doing.

He was taken by the soldiers to the house and laid on the porch, while a messenger was dispatched for Dr. Uquhart. Booth seemed to be dead, but, when someone tried to place a pillow under his head, he opened his eyes and said: "No, no, let me lie here; let me die here." Later, as they tried to make him more comfortable, he repeated the request.

All the members of the Garrett family were present, including a woman who was visiting in the home. The latter saturated a cloth with water and placed it to his dry lips. Under her gentle touch he opened his eyes and said: "Tell mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best."

After a few minutes of silence he opened his eyes again, repeated his message to his mother and closed them in death.

SOLDIERS TAKE BODY

The soldiers sewed his body in an army blanket, put it in a spring wagon and drove away in the wagon to Washington City, taking Herold also.

The body was turned over to Dr. George Loring Porter, who was in medical charge of the arsenal in Washington. I am indebted for some of the following facts to an article by Dr. Porter in the Columbia magazine of April, 1911, and also to data furnished me by his only living son, J. Benton Porter of 1527 Spruce street, Philadelphia, and by his daughter-in-law, Mrs. George Porter of Langdon, N. H.

Dr. Porter and his wife were out rowing on the Potomac that afternoon and, in their absence, soldiers rowed up to the summer house on the bank of the river, ordered the negro nurse and the little daughter of Dr. Porter away, threw the body wrapped in a gunny sack and blanket on the floor and departed, leaving a sentinel on guard.

On his return, Dr. Porter, Mr. Stebbins, the military storekeeper, and four enlisted men took charge of the body. Dr. Porter and Mr. Stebbins, the latter carrying a lantern, led the way. The four men followed, the body being in a wagon, one man leading the horse, one following and one on either side.

On reaching the old penitentiary building the men were blindfolded and led about through the building. Mr. Stebbins opened the massive door of the cell and the body was secreted under a stage, the door was locked and the key returned to the war department.

CERTAIN OF IDENTITY

Dr. Porter says the identification of the body as that of John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Lincoln in Ford's theatre, was complete. The mustache and the lock which hung over his forehead were cut off at Dr. Mudd's, who treated his wound on his flight from Washington, and his face showed identity with the one which that mustache and the lock of hair had adorned. Several men identified him by various signs. Among them was Charles Dawson, chief clerk of the National hotel, who positively identified the body by the initials "J. W. B." which had been tattooed in India ink on the right hand between the thumb and forefinger. Mr. Dawson swore that he had often seen the letters on his right hand when he signed the register and that he once said: "Booth, what a fool you were to disfigure that pretty white hand in such a way."

Dr. J. Frederick May also identified him by a scar on his neck where he had removed a small tumor from the left side, three inches below the ear. Booth was anxious that it should heal "by first intention," but while he was in a rehearsal with Charlotte Cushman, when she was to grasp him by the shoulder, she seized his neck, tearing the wound wide open, and it healed "by granulation," leaving a mark by which Dr. May identified the body as that of Booth.

On the removal of the body at the request of his family, in 1869, to the family burying ground in Baltimore, his brother, the famous Edwin Booth, had a new examination made and declared himself satisfied as to the identity of the body. The permission to remove the body to Baltimore was given on the one condition that there

should be no stone or marker of any kind to identify the grave. There it rests today.

Dr. Porter had medical charge of the conspirators during their imprisonment. He was at the execution of Herold, Levi Payne, Mrs. Surratt and George A. Atzerodt, on July 7, 1865, and officially pronounced them dead. He sailed with Captain Budd under sealed orders to place the other four conspirators at Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas. O'Laughlin died there of yellow fever. Dr. Mudd did good service in breaking the epidemic and was pardoned. Arnold and Spangler were pardoned and released in about three years. John H. Surratt was acquitted of complicity in the crime. Spangler died in 1875 at Dr. Mudd's home. Dr. Mudd died in 1883; Arnold many years later.

Capt. Christian Rath, who supervised the execution of the four, became a railway mail clerk on the road between Detroit and Grand Rapids and died years ago at his home in Jackson, Mich.

Boston Corbett, who shot Booth that morning in Mr. Garrett's barn, lived in Camden, N. J., for years. Asked why he shot when ordered to take Booth alive, Corbett said he looked ready to shoot the first one who came into the door of the barn, and "besides," he said, "he deserved to die." Corbett went to Kansas, lost his mind and died there.

An Interesting Letter

About

THE DEATH OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH

Written by

The Reverend R. B. Garrett

of

Portsmouth, Virginia

To

General A. R. Taylor

of

Memphis, Tennessee

Designed and Printed
at Peoria, Illinois,

in 1934

To My Fellow Members
of the Oakwood Lincoln Club:

The hoax which this Garrett letter controverts will not live. It has few adherents left in spite of the frequent references to it in the press. Like most sensations, a little thought and a little study of the basic facts bring the end.

Because the purport of this letter is what lawyers call competent, relevant, material--and hence admissible--evidence; because it speaks so persuasively, coming from such a reliable source; and because it is eye-witness testimony, I am taking the liberty of preserving it in facsimile form for the Lincoln shelves of our members.

This is being done with the permission of General A. R. Taylor of Memphis, Tennessee, who owns the original. We are most grateful to him. We are also indebted to my friend Mr. A. J. Walsmith of Oskaloosa, Iowa, an ardent and veteran Lincoln student, for learning of the letter and securing this permission.

(Signed) James W. Bollinger.

Davenport, Iowa,
February 12, 1934.

COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

R. B. Garrett, Pastor,
Residence, 437 London Street

Portsmouth, Va.,
Oct. 24, 1907.

Mr. A. R. Taylor.

Dear Sir.

Replying to your letter of October 21 -- I would say that I have had some correspondence with Mr. Bates in regard to the matter mentioned. He asked me to furnish something for his book but I am very sure that he has not published what I wrote. If he had taken the trouble to verify the statements made by me, which he could have easily done, there would have been no use in publishing the book, and I told him so. There never was the slightest doubt about the death of J. Wilkes Booth on April 26, 1865. There never was a missing link in the chain which led from the theatre in Washington to my father's barn.

Mr. Bates' letters to me indicate clearly that he had never taken the trouble to study the real history of the flight and death of Booth, even superficially. Like many men possessed with a theory, he makes every fact bend to his theory. He was so eager to fit the facts to his theory that he clutched at straws. For instance, it is a fact that on the second day of his stay at my father's home, Booth became alarmed at the passing of some soldiers in sight of the house and hobbled on his crutches to some woods back of the house where he remained for an hour or two. Mr. Bates in his letter to me alludes to this fact and asks "How do you know that the same man came back from the woods that went into the woods?" Did he think us a set of fools that we should not know a man in broad daylight that we had been entertaining for two days? Again in his letter he says that Booth was not identified after his death. But I saw it done, and our whole family, and the officers, many of whom knew him personally, saw it done. Remember that he was a strikingly handsome man with a face one could scarcely forget. The detectives had a printed description of him which they proceeded to verify after his death. It agreed in every particular, height, color of hair, eyes, size of hand, foot,

etc. It said "He has his initials in India ink on his forearm just below the elbow." I saw the officers roll back his sleeve and saw the initials J.W.B. just where they were said to be. I saw the detective place the cabinet photograph of John Wilkes Booth, the well known actor, beside the dead face of the man we had known for two days, and all the books in the world could not persuade me that God ever made two men so exactly alike. I read his diary, found on his body, and preserved yet in Washington, in which he referred to what he had done. I heard him say "Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best." It was through another dying utterance of his, that my father and brothers escaped the penalty of harboring an assassin when he said, "It is hard for this man to suffer for what I have done. He does not know who I am." I know by contemporary history that many who knew him personally saw the body in Washington, and that in order that no possible mistake might be made, a surgeon who had removed a tumor from his neck came and pointed out the scar of the operation.

I know that his family never had any doubts on the subject. In my library are valuable books bearing the autograph of Edwin Booth, and in one of them a letter which says "Your family will always have our warmest thanks for your kindness to him whose madness wrought so much ill to us." I know that they sought and secured the body of the dead man and buried it in the family lot in Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, and over it placed a stone on which is carved his name, "John Wilkes". I have seen it myself. I know that Mr. Bates' story is only one of many such utterly improbable and impossible. To ask people to believe that the U. S. Government and his own family, and his many friends, should be deceived by a chance resemblance into believing that Wilkes Booth was dead while he was still alive is too great a strain on faith.

Many books were written to account for the lost dauphin of France, and many people believed that Napoleon's Marshal Ney escaped the bullets of the firing squad and died of old age in North Carolina, but nobody who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the facts, will ever have any doubt but that John Wilkes Booth died at my father's house on April 26, 1865.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) R. B. GARRETT.

P.S.: I have not seen Mr. Bates' book but am acquainted with his theory through his letters to me.

STATE OF TENNESSEE, }
COUNTY OF SHELBY. } SS:

I, A. R. Taylor, being first duly sworn, depose
and say:

That I am a resident of Memphis, Tennessee;

That the foregoing is an original letter written
by the Reverend R. B. Garrett, and received by me shortly
after the date it bears;

I further say that this letter is a part of
the correspondence between us arising on account of
Mr. Finis L. Bates' book on the date of the death of John
Wilkes Booth.

(Signed) A. R. TAYLOR.

Subscribed and sworn to before me by A. R.
Taylor this 15th day of May, 1933.

(Signed) ALICE GREGORY,

Notary Public in and for
Shelby County, Tennessee.

My com exp
4-21-35

AN INTERESTING LETTER

ABOUT

THE DEATH OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH

WRITTEN BY

THE REVEREND R. B. GARRETT

OF

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

TO

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PRIVately PRINTED
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February 12, 1934.

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COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,
6, BOSTON, MASS.
RESIDENTIAL, 14, LONDON STREET

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2

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16, COLLEGE STREET,
LONDON, S.W. 1.



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Reported by V. M.

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COLL SPURGEON BREWER CHIEF
MILITARY POLICE
HEADQUARTERS - EXCELSIOR STREET

I saw this officer: well back his sleeve

forearm just below the elbow.' I saw the
officers roll back his sleeve and saw the ini-
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COLLECTOR'S SERIES HARVEST CUE 1000.
H. H. GARDNER, PUBLISHER
REPRODUCED BY AUTHORITY OF THE STATE

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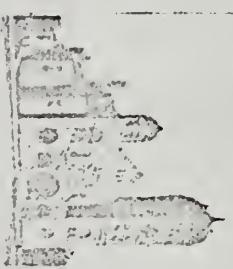
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Illustrated in the

100

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trouble to acquaint himself with
the facts, will ever have any doubt
but that John Wilkes Booth died
at my father's house on April 26
1865.

Giving very truly
R. B. G. Garrett.

P.S.

I have not seen Mr. Bates' book but am
acquainted with his theory through his
letters to me.

STATE OF TENNESSEE, }
COUNTY OF SHELBY. } ss:

I, A. R. Taylor, being first duly sworn, depose
and say:

That I am a resident of Memphis, Tennessee;

That the foregoing is an original letter written
by the Reverend R. B. Garrett, and received by
me shortly after the date it bears;

I further say that this letter is a part of the cor-

respondence between us arising on account of
Mr. Finis L. Bates' book on the date of the death
of John Wilkes Booth.

(Signed) A. R. TAYLOR.

Subscribed and sworn to before me by A. R.

Taylor this 15th day of May, 1933.

(Signed) ALICE GREGORY,

Notary Public in and for
Shelby County, Tennessee.

My son esp
Alice Gregory
4/21/35
Notary public in and for
Shelby County, Tennessee.
My com exp
4.21.35

OAKWOOD LINCOLN CLUB

Joseph B. Oakleaf
1858 — 1930

PAUL M. ANGLE
Springfield, Illinois

HARRY J. LYTHE
Davenport, Iowa

JOHN S. LITTLE
Rushville, Illinois

JOHN W. FLING, JR.
Wyoming, Illinois

P. G. RENNICK
Peoria, Illinois

HARRY T. MORGAN
Peoria, Illinois

EUGENE AHRENDS
Peoria, Illinois

EDWARD J. JACOB
Peoria, Illinois

M. L. HOUSER
Peoria, Illinois

JAMES W. BOLLINGER
Davenport, Iowa

3
10
54

